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critic's duty in the way of restraint and cautious judgment, I think he would have done better to follow somewhat more the forthright, dogmatic old Doctor whom he writes of, who so loudly enunciated and so vigorously upheld his judgments whether right or wrong. In his comments upon Boswell or upon Johnson the author is clear and just; in his effort to make the reader appreciate what value he would place upon the salon and the social influence, he seems less happy. **PIERCE BUTLER.**

BEYOND DISILLUSION. A DRAMATIC STUDY OF MODERN MARRIAGE. By William Norman Guthrie. The Petrus Stuyvesandt Book Guild at St. Mark's-in-the-Bouwerie, Manhattan.

Holy matrimony, which was commended of Saint Paul to be honorable among all men, has received scant honor at the hands of many modern playwrights. The present drama, however, attempts a defence of the institution and a solution of its problems. A brilliant architect, harassed by the worries of a domesticity which includes four noisy children, and obliged to do work which does not satisfy his artistic ideals, determines to leave children and wife. To the latter he confesses that she no longer represents the ideal which he once found in her. Later in the play, the wife too deserts the children that she may become a dancer. In the last act the husband sees the wife dance to the music of his own composing and finds that she again expresses his ideal. So after both have independently discovered their ideals in different spheres of activity, they are reunited in love and return to domesticity.

In the Foreword the author suggests that a bridegroom and a bride should be respectively "prepared, nay, passionately eager, to be crucified on the cross which the other should represent, because of a holy devotion to the ideal of fellowship and loyalty, and the devout hope of offspring better than themselves and of a nobler civilization to supersede that of their generation." The characters in the present play are not willing to suffer such crucifixion. It is rather a begging of the question to settle it as the author does. He admits indeed in the Foreword that he has "resorted to what may seem an improbable solution of his problem, thinking it far less serious to be taxed with improba-

bility in plot, considering how very extraordinary are the happenings of life, than to have the ideal purpose of his work miscarry."

But the trouble is that in real life the ideal settlement must be confronted with just this simple question: Will it work? And even granting that the solution lies in the independent development of husband and wife so that they meet on the highest planes of their respective personalities, even then the development of the wife's personality through public dancing will not commend itself as a practical solution to most matrons approaching middle-age.

Moreover, the present characters are not sufficiently life-like to make the solution convincing. Like those in such a play as Shaw's *Marriage*, they are to a great extent only masks through which the author discusses his problem. But for the keen wit of the earlier play there is substituted a rather flaccid rhetoric. Thus: "Since these things have occurred, and words have been spoken that ripened my decision irrespective of any opinions my family and my intimate friends may cherish"—which is the language of *The Polite Letter Writer* and not of real conversation. The talk of the children which attempts to be realistically slangy strikes me as forced and unnatural.

The play's moral is undeniably on the side of the angels, but the author does not speak with the tongues of either angels or real men, and his progress is pedestrian rather than winged. His muse, like that of so much well-meaning fiction, plants one foot squarely on the commonplace and points the other upward in a rather indefinite direction towards the stars and idealism. This attitude is less suggestive of advance than of instability.

In an Afterword follows a sequence of seven very Meredithian sonnets, in the course of which the author finds occasion to ask,—

"What shall to th' spirit its extreme bliss grant
as,— ever th' quickening pulse and thrill of growth :
to reach, expansive, wrestling from the loth
stark elements their nurture ministrant
for toppling bloom and fruit? or, calm to plant
the mailed heel archangelic on behemoth
and spewing leviathan? or heavenly wroth
like solar photosphere leap, blaze, and pant?"

We frankly confess our inability to answer these questions.

L. WARDLAW MILES.